

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, as President Bush has said, Tuesday's attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are nothing short of acts of war. No less than the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, they were a premeditated, secret, and carefully orchestrated assault on the American people and the great symbols of American power and influence in world affairs. These attacks will not go unanswered.

Since this dastardly attack, there has been a flurry of efforts in the House and Senate, proposed legislation, calls for hearings and oversight to find out what went wrong and what improvements can and should be made. While this is certainly understandable, any action by the Congress should not be taken in haste and should be coordinated, not piecemeal.

The timing of our action is most important for another reason. In a time of war, the executive branch, and in particular the President, must be allowed to focus solely on identifying, finding, and punishing those responsible. I therefore call on my colleagues, Members and committee chairmen in both the House and the Senate, to refrain from piecemeal legislation and oversight during this crisis and to support the President fully in addressing the challenges ahead.

As chairman of the House Committee on the Judiciary and entrusted with oversight responsibility for all Federal law enforcement, I am compelled to remind my colleagues the criminal investigation now being conducted is paramount. From that investigation, we will learn much about the identity of the perpetrators, the means by which these attacks were carried out, and even the most effective way to respond. This is not the time, however, to assess blame, to second guess, or to appear to do so. It is time to back the President, period.

I have therefore written the President to ask him to identify what law enforcement and investigative resources, including additional funding and legal authority, are needed to prosecute this effort. I have pledged to review those requests on an expedited basis.

I am also concerned about the multiple and duplicative briefings requested of law enforcement, which may have the unintended consequences of impeding, impairing, or distracting law enforcement from its core mission. At the same time, I recognize that Congress needs to be kept informed on the progress of the investigation.

I suggest, therefore, that there be organized, coordinated, and non-duplicative briefings that will allow law enforcement to carry on its critical mandate without undue interference from Congress. I intend to work with the Speaker, the Attorney General, and the FBI Director to provide regular law en-

forcement briefings to Members on the investigation.

These briefings will provide Members with the information they need to carry out their constitutional responsibilities without jeopardizing the criminal investigation. The investigation may very well provide insight into how the attackers evaded our intelligence and security networks. There will certainly be ample time for Congress to address those issues later. I have been informed that we may be assured that the Federal Government's law enforcement and intelligence officials are already taking steps to prevent future attacks.

I intend to work with the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) to discourage House committees from holding premature hearings in the middle of a Federal criminal investigation of these attacks. Such hearings are likely to distract Federal resources from the immediate needs of a full investigation.

Right now, it should be Congress' priority to support President Bush's efforts to make an appropriate response. Regular briefings and restraints will permit Congress to be fully informed about the developments, provide information for consideration at the appropriate time, but, most importantly, will allow the President the latitude he needs to prosecute the campaign against those who carried out these outrageous attacks on our country and its citizens.

This Congress must rise to the occasion and act responsibly and wisely. History will judge us favorably from our prudence.

Mr. Speaker, I insert in the RECORD a letter written by myself; Senator LEAHY, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee; and the ranking members, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and Senator HATCH, to the President of the United States.

U.S. CONGRESS,

Washington, DC, September 13, 2001.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,
President of the United States, The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We write regarding the investigation of the horrific terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001. This tragedy has resulted in a massive worldwide investigation that is without question the most important ever undertaken by the Federal Government. The Department of Justice has mobilized thousands of federal and state personnel and is coordinating myriad federal and state agencies, a task that will utilize tremendous resources. We commend the efforts of all the men and women of the Department of Justice and all Federal and state agencies investigating this horrific event.

We wish to make sure that the Department of Justice, the FBI, and all Federal law enforcement agencies involved in this investigation have all the resources and authority needed to investigate these incidents and would like to know whether additional resources or legal authorities are needed to complete this mission successfully. The

House and Senate Judiciary Committees stand ready to review expeditiously any requests made by the Administration in this regard and to provide all appropriate resources.

Sincerely,

F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER,
Jr.,

Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary.

JOHN CONYERS, Jr.,
Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary.

PATRICK LEAHY,
Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

ORRIN HATCH,
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

AUTHORIZING USE OF MILITARY FORCE IN RESPONSE TO TERRORIST ATTACKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the senseless human tragedy caused by the craven terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, weigh heavily on our minds and will do so for many days, months, and years to come.

Many have said our Nation will never be the same. I agree. Our Nation is stronger, more united, and prouder than possibly at any time in our history. The outpouring of grief and offers of assistance, both here and abroad, have been comforting. The terrorists may have collapsed our buildings; but in response, we are building a stronger America.

Our thoughts are with those who have lost loved ones and with those whose loved ones are still missing. Our thoughts are with those who have undertaken the difficult, dangerous, and heroic task of rescuing and treating the wounded and recovering the bodies of those who were killed.

As the gravity of the situation sinks in, our thoughts have also turned to those responsible for these atrocities. Our Nation must take action against those responsible, including those who provide safe havens and financial support for terrorists. U.S. actions to exact justice must be deliberate, decisive, and effective.

However, the United States must be careful not to indiscriminately attack civilian populations in other nations, which will only further the cause of the terrorists and perpetuate a cycle of violence.

Decisions on war and peace are the most profound decisions Members of Congress can ever be required to make. This is the second time in my career I